

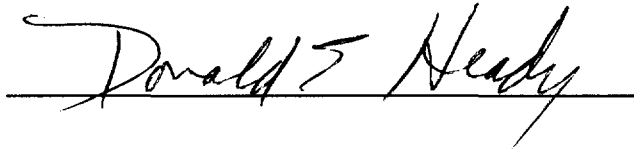
Director's Concept for the Musical Working
Book by Studs Terkel
Adaptation by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Fasco

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Leah S Price

Dr. Donald Heady

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald S Heady". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a single horizontal line.

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

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PURPOSE OF THESIS

My honors thesis was combined with my musical theatre project in order to fulfil both requirements at once. I directed, musically directed and acted in my production of Working. Although this project was incredibly cumbersome, nothing short of it would have illustrated all that I had learned about music and theatre during my tenure at Ball State University. What is contained in the following pages is my director's concept for this production.

DIRECTOR'S CONCEPT

This production of Working will be done much in the spirit of Grotowski's "Poor Theatre." That is, it will lack lavish sets, lights, props and costumes. This is congruent with Stephen Schwartz's stage directions throughout the play. In it he talks about a having a bare stage and actors miming props. Also, he leaves the use of costumes up to the director.

This approach will place almost all theatrical responsibility on the actors. They must convey all characters and character changes almost solely with language and movement.

THEME

The script of Working is a collage of individual lives combining to form a picture of American working-life. Every character in Working has one main objective: "something to point to, something to be proud of..." Therefore, the main message that should be conveyed to the audience is that of hope; that no matter how dehumanizing your work is, you must keep your individuality and you must have hope in your future.

However, the theme will not be directly stated to the actors unless they have failed to reach this conclusion through their own personal discoveries through the rehearsal process. Improvisational exercises and discussions will be held during the rehearsal process that will help guide the actors toward this theme. I would rather they discover it on their own, therefore making it personal, rather than me dictating what they should do.

STAGING

All characters will be present onstage at all times. If they are not directly involved in an individual scene, they will help create the setting and atmosphere. Such as, in the millworking scene, extra actors will literally become the machines.

Because the script is both presentational and representational, a reader's theatre approach will be used in staging. The fourth wall will be pulled up and down throughout the show.

Also, environmental theatre techniques will be used in some scenes to involve the audience completely in the action. In the housewife scene for instance, the wives will perform their "chores" in the audience's space.

The set will be set up in Thrust style with props and costumes tables placed at the back of the stage. All character and scene changes will take place in front of the audience and will be made to be part of the play rather than "scene changes."

BLOCKING

All musical numbers will be choreographed before the combinations are taught to the actors. I will pre-block the play in a general manner. Specific blocking will be done organically, allowing the actors to better define their characters. I chose to pre-block in order to speed this somewhat tedious process along and to make our time efficiently spent.

ACTING

Because the "words in the script are those of real people taken in an interview" (Schwartz), it is necessary that the acting be as realistic as possible. In order to help the actors achieve realistic characters, they will be required to take individual "field trips" where they talk to and/or observe people who work in the profession that their character's do. Also, throughout the rehearsal process, the actors will be involved in improvisational exercises that will help them with character development.

The actors will also be required to read their character interviews from Studs Terkel's novel Working. This will help tremendously with character development.

MOVEMENT

Most of the movement will be realistic however, Spolin's improvisational techniques will be used to create "inhuman" movement. For example, actors will move as factory machinery, clocks, cash registers, etc.

SET

There will be no set for this production of Working. However, minimal set pieces will be used to help create levels and to help create an environment conducive to natural movement.

PROPS

There will be two or three props tables with all personal props placed on them. These tables will be onstage, in audience view, and the actors will get their own personal props as scene and character changes occur. The props will be kept to a minimum and will be used as a suggestive device. For instance, the waitress

will simply have a serving tray, the secretary will have a pad of paper and a pencil, etc.

COSTUMES

The costumes will act as a palette so that each individual character can be painted on it. All actors will be dressed in earth colors. Each actor will be dressed in a different hue within the same color palette. (i.e. browns and greens). Hopefully, the colors will be strong enough to create a colorful, theatrical picture while allowing enough versatility to enable the audience to accept character changes.

Both the women and the men will wear a leotard or tank top. The women will wear stirrup pants and the men will wear casual slacks (preferably without pleats). This clothing type was chosen in order to allow flexible movement. The "tank-style" top will, of course, show bare skin. This will help communicate the idea that the majority of the working class in America works with their bodies. The audience should see muscles and sweat. The naked skin should not, in any way, be sexual.

Almost all characters will have a personal costume "additions," as it were. For example, Roberta (a hooker) will have a stole, the housewives will have aprons, etc. The costume pieces will be used to help convey different characters and also to create changing pictures. The pieces, with their different colors and textures, will actually paint the picture of the character without stealing the main focus; that of the characters and their movement.

MUSIC

The orchestra will be a piano, percussion and guitar. The rehearsal accompanist will be Nick Foster and the director will act as vocal coach.

DANCE

Most of the dancing in this production will consist of stylized movement. For example, the dancing in "Brother Trucker" will be done with the movement of truck drivers rather than dancers being truckers.

However, some numbers will require dance such as in "Cleaning Women." The number will be performed in the style of the Supremes, complete with gesturing back-up singers. This choice was made because the song is not only written in this style, but because it is also Maggie's dream of being something other than she is. Also, if it is possible to cast a dancer as the waitress, the number will be based on ballet.

The concept went through many transformations during the rehearsal process. The most dramatic change occurred at the beginning of the rehearsals. This was due to casting necessities. I had a cast of mostly young actors, and after considering their level of experience, I realized that most of them were not ready for the kind of project I had envisioned.

The biggest change was that the actors were not onstage at all times. However, I used as much chorus in each scene as I could. If an actor was offstage it was usually not more than one scene.

Technically, the show was simple. The production lacked a set of any sort. For the most part, locations were suggested through text and characterization. In some scenes chairs or stools were used. These were not used suggestively, but realistically.

The props tables ended up being backstage rather than onstage. (This was done because the actors were no longer making all character changes onstage.) Props were kept at a minimum and were used to help suggest characters.

Basic black was used as the palette. Men were in black pants women were in black stretch pants. Both wore tank tops. All characters had costume "pieces." This means that they had one or two articles of clothing that totally suggested their character. This concept worked very well and this is largely due to the fact that the actors designed their own costumes. They carefully chose simple pieces that perfectly conveyed their characters.

The lighting was a wonderful surprise. The design was enormously helpful in smoothing scene changes and in emphasizing the theme, which was hope.

The staging stayed within the original concept. Presentational, representational and environmental forms of staging were employed.

Movement, acting and dance also stayed within the ideal of the original concept. Although the dance became a larger part of the show because I was lucky enough to get a wonderful choreographer.

AUDITION FORM FOR WORKING

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____

AGE: _____
HAIR: _____
WEIGHT: _____
HEIGHT: _____

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE: Please list three roles you've played that would be beneficial to you in this show

1.

2.

3.

VOICE RANGE: _____

AGE RANGE: _____

ROLES AUDITIONING FOR: _____

WILL YOU ACCEPT ANY ROLE: _____

PLEASE LIST ANY CONFLICTS YOU HAVE HERE:

Rehearsals will be from March 2 through March 4
March 14 through April 9 with performances on
April 10 through 12 in Strother Theatre
(Sabrina has a more detailed rehearsal schedule)

HAVE YOU READ THE SCRIPT? _____

PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHY YOU WANT TO BE IN THIS SHOW:

PLEASE LIST YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE OF THEATRE:

*****DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE*****

Rehearsal Schedule for Working

February 28:	7:00	Auditions
March 1:	7:00	Sing Through
March 2:	6:30	Sing Through "Something to Point To"(SP) "All the Livelong Day" (AD)
March 3:	6:30	Repeat Chorus Numbers, then Read-Through
March 5-13:		Spring Break
March 14:	6:30	OFF-BOOK for AD and SP, Block
March 15:	6:30	Block I-III, run Block I-IV (Teacher then Newsboy), run
March 16:	6:30	Block I-V, run Block I-VI, run
March 17:	6:30	Block I-VII, run Block I-VIII, run
March 18:	6:30	Block I-II RUN ACT I
March 19:		OFF
March 20:	6:30	Block II-I, run Block II-II, run Block II-III, run
March 21:	6:30	Block II-IV, run Block II-V, run Block II-VI, run
March 22:	6:30	Block II-VII, run Block II-VIII, run
March 23:	6:30	RUN ACT II
March 24:	6:30	Work Act I
March 25:	6:30	Work Act II
March 26:		OFF ("Loves of Cass...")
March 27:	6:30	Work Act I (OFF BOOK!!!)
March 28:	6:30	Work Act II (OFF BOOK!!!)
March 29:	????	(Strother) rehearsal will start immediately following "Festival of the Word" Work Problem Scenes and Numbers
March 30:	6:30	Work Act I, Run
March 31:	6:30	Work Act II, Run
April 1:	6:30	Run Show
April 2:	6:30	Run Show ("Night Mother")
April 3:	6:30	Run Show
April 4:	6:30	Run Show
April 5:		off ("Consul")
April 6:	TBA	(Strother) Tech (no dress)
April 7:	TBA	(Strother) Tech (no dress)
April 8:	TBA	(Strother) Dress Rehearsal
April 9:	TBA	(Strother) Dress Rehearsal
April 10:		PERFORMANCE!
April 11:		PERFORMANCE!
April 12:		PERFORMANCE!

* this rehearsal schedule is subject to changes!!!

IMPROVISATIONAL GAMES FOR REHEARSAL
(Improvisation for the Theatre by Viola Spolin)

WORKING

1. Orientation Game #1
(simple activity)
page 62
2. Play Ball
page 63
3. How Old Am I?
(waiting for the bus)
page 68
4. Part of A Whole
(animate/inanimate)
page 73
5. What Do I Do For A Living?
page 74
6. Maintaining Surface Heights
page 79
7. Transformation Of Objects
page 83
8. Where Game A
page 101
9. What's Beyond
page 102
10. What Time Is It?
page 107
11. Who Game
page 109
12. Who Game And Where And What
page 115
13. Quick Selection for Where
page 116
14. What's Beyond D
Page 130
15. The Specialized Where
page 138
16. Exercise for the Body
page 150
17. Tense Muscle
page 153
18. Puppets
page 154
19. Two Scenes
(give and take)
page 160
20. Mob Scenes
page 166
21. Eye Contact #1
page 176
22. Pitchman
page 176

23. Contrapuntal Argument
page 180
24. Contrpuntal Argument B
page 181
25. Contrpuntal Argument C
page 182
26. Animal Improvisation
page 262
27. Random Walk
page 221
28. Give and Take B
page 230
29. Camera A
page 231
30. Silent Scream
page 239
31. Rejection
page 246
32. Costume Piece
page 266
33. Physical Irriation B
page 267
34. Creating A Stage Picture
page 273

FEMALE CHARACTERS

YOUNG:

Diane: early 20's, secretary
scene: I-10,11,12
Babe: late 20's, checker
scene: I-20,21
Heather: early 20's, telephone operator
mono: II-5,6,7,8
Pam: mid 20's, checker
(small part with three lines)
Sharon: early 20's, telephone operator
mono: II-7
John: 8 or 9, newsboy
song: Neat to be a Newsboy (mezzo sop/soprano)

MIDDLE AGE:

Nora: early 30's, editor
mono: I-10
Roberta: mid 30's, hooker
mono: I-29, 30
Grace: late 30's, millworker
mono: I-32
song: Millworking (alto/mezzo soprano)
Maggie: mid 40's, cleaning woman
mono: II-17,19
song: Cleaning Women (alto)
Fran: mid 40's, telephone operator
mono: II-6,7,8
Delores: early 40's, waitress
mono: II-1
song: It's An Art (mezzo sop/soprano)
Kate: early 30's, housewife
song: Just a Housewife (second soprano)

OLDER:

Rose: 60's, teacher
mono: I-17,18
song: Nobody Tells Me How (alto)

MALE CHARACTERS

YOUNG:

Brett: mid 20's, boxboy
scene: I-21, mono: I-21
Charlie: early 20's, copy boy
mono: II-20,21
Emilio: mid 20's, migrant worker
mono: I-22,24
song: Un Mejor Dia Vendra (Baritone/Tenor)
Conrad: early 20's, meter reader
mono: I-26
Ralph: 19, tie salesman
mono: II-19

MIDDLE AGE:

Frank: 30's, trucker
scene: II-4,5
song: Brother Trucker (bass, baritone, tenor depending
on casting for Dave)
Tom: 30's, fireman
mono: II-16
Dave: 30's, trucker
song: Brother Trucker (bass, baritone, tenor depending
on casting for Frank)
Mike: 37, steelworker
mono: I-4,5
Lieuten: mid 40's, small role with two lines

OLDER:

Al: 50's, parking attendant
mono: I-6,7
song: Lovin Al (baritone)
Herb: 50's, corporate executive
mono: I-13,14
Anthony: 60's, stone mason
mono: I-36
song: Mason (baritone/tenor)
Joe: 60's, retired
mono: II-12,14,15
song: Joe (bass/baritone)

OTHER:

Spanish Worker: age unimportant
song: duet on Un Mejor Dia Vendra
(bass/baritone)
Man: song: Fathers and Sons
(will be Mike, Frank, or Joe depending on the voice and
age ranges of the actors cast)

NUMBER BREAKDOWN

WORKING

	TITLE	PAGE
COMPANY	All the Livelong Day	1
	Hey Somebody Reprise #1	5
	Hey Somebody Reprise #2	28
	If I Could Have Been	30
	Hey Somebody Reprise #3	37
	Something To Point To	62
MALE/FEMALE CHORUS	Lovin' Al	6
	Un Mejor Dia Vendra	17
	It's An Art	37
	Brother Trucker	44
FEMALE CHORUS	Just a Housewife	19
	Cleanin' Women	52
MALE CHORUS	Newsboy	11
	Millwork	24

NUMBER BREAKDOWN

WORKING

SINGER	TITLE	PAGE
Al Calinda	Lovin' Al	6
John Rolfin	Newsboy	11
	Fathers and Sons	57
Rose Hoffman	Nobody Tells Me How	14
Spanish Worker/Emilio	Un Mejor Dia Vendra	17
Kate Rushton	Just A Housewife	19
Girl Singer or Grace	Millwork	24
Male Singer or Anthony	The Mason	28
Delores Dante	It's An Art	37
Frank Decker	Brother Trucker	44
	Fathers and Sons	57
Dave	Brother Trucker	44
Joe Zutty	Joe	49
Maggie Holmes	Cleanin' Women	52
Like LeFevre	Fathers and Sons	57
Charlie Blossom	Fathers and Sons	57
Ralph Werner	Fathers and Sons	57

PROPS LIST FOR WORKING

- 5-7 sports sections from Newspaper (chorus)
- 2 parking tickets (Al)
- 1 office file (Nora)
- papers (Nora)
- stapler (Diane)
- wastebasket (Nora)
- dictation pad (Diane)
- pencil (Diane)
- dictionary (Herb)
- newspaper (paperboy)
- blackboard (Rose)
- chalk (Rose)
- grape leaflets (Emilio)
- bag of groceries (Brett)
- suitcase (Grace)
- waitress serving tray (Delores)
- phone (booth?) (Frank)
- 2 large flashlights (white bulbs) (Chorus or Frank and Dave)
- 2 large flashlights (red bulbs) (Chorus)
- cleaning rag (Maggie)
- ball (paperboy)
- flashlight (Conrad)



Working

A Musical

FROM THE BOOK BY STUDS TERKEL
Adapted by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Fasco

APRIL 10, 11, 12
8 PM

EDWARD S. STROTHER THEATRE

Department of Theatre and Dance Performance
Ball State University • College of Fine Arts

About Edward S. Strother Theatre...

The Edward S. Strother Theatre is a student managed, faculty supervised, theatre that offers faculty and students opportunities to direct and to perform in flexible, experimental space. Originally named Studio Theatre, the simplistic design of the space allows for limitless creativity and versatility in staging, lighting, and design.

The theatre was renamed in May of 1987 in honor of Dr. Edward S. Strother. During his 41 years of teaching at Ball State, he directed, designed, and supervised hundreds of plays at Ball State and Muncie Civic. He was named head of the Department of Speech and Theatre and the first chairman of the Department of Theatre. He has collaborated in writing three textbooks, and as a playwright he has written a dozen or so one-act plays, six of which have been mounted in Strother Theatre.

Please consider Ball State Theatre when you are doing your "Spring cleaning." We would greatly appreciate donations of used clothing, especially men's clothing, including hats and shoes, as well as furniture. You'll never know when you could make an appearance on our stage - if not in person, perhaps in style - even if it's yesterday's style.

Patrons should be advised that the consumption of food and beverages, smoking, the taking of photographs with or without flash, and the use of tape recorders are prohibited in the theatre.

In the interest of safety and out of courtesy to others, please remain seated until intermission of the final curtain. Thank you.

Donations will be accepted for the Theatre Scholarships

Upcoming Productions

SUMMERTREE... "Cave" AC 007... April 13-16... 8 pm... April 16... 2:30p
FESTIVAL OF DANCE... University Theatre... April 21-23... 8 pm... April 24... 2:30 pm
MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM... April 21, 22, 30, May 1
ILLUMINATION... University Theatre... April 29... 8 pm
SCOOTER THOMAS... Strother Theatre... May 1... 2:30 pm

WORKING a musical
from the book by Studs Terkel Adapted by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Fasco

Songs by:
Craig Carnelia
Micki Grant
Mary Rogers and Susan Birkenhead
Stephen Schwartz
James Taylor

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

Director/Musical Director
Orchestra and Musical Director/Rehearsal Pianist
Choreographer
Stage Manager
Lighting Designer
Assistant Lighting Designer
Technical Assistant
Costumes and Properties Design
Faculty Advisor

Leah Price
Nicholas Foster
Eric Emery
Brina Davis
Paul A. Estby
Christopher S. Arthur
Rob Whitt
Cast and Crew
Don Heady
Judy Yordon
Kathy Jaremski
Michael Worcel

THE CAST

Mike LeFevre, Frank Decker, Tom Patrick
Al Calinda, Conrad Swibel, Anthony Palazzo
Nora Watson, Roberta Victor, Fran Swenson, Maggie Holmes
Diane Wilson, Babe Secoli, Kate Rushton
Herb Rosen, Brett McCormich, Dave, Joe Zutty
John Roling, Grace Clements, Heather Lamb, Charlie Blossom
Emilio Hernandez, Sharon Atkins
Rose Hoffman, Delores Dante

Eric Emery
Anthony Montgomery
Amy Kern
Nancy Moore
Rodney Coe
Leah Price
Gina Lucido
Renee Barrett

THE BAND

Pianist
Acoustic Guitar, Bass
Percussion

Nicholas Foster
Nathan Anderson
Brad Gunyon

THE CREW

Nikole Bankowski, Rebecca Alexrod, Missy Young, Paul Bieschke

Special Thanks to: Don Heady, Kathy Jaremski, Linda Smith, Judy Yordon, Michael Worcel, Leo Schlosser, Rob Whitt, Chris Arthur, Brina, Paul Estby, Dana Sheets, Sarah Mangelsdorf, Mark Hillenbrand, Kip Shawger, Gil Bloom (for the extensions), Patrick Kelsey, The Cast and Crew of Cass McGuire, Corissa Shaw, Toni Schaperjohn, Dr. LaCasse, Jerney Hardin, Nathan Anderson, Brad Gunyon, Nick Foster, Cain Bilbrey, and Chris Malone.